

**MINUTES OF HARRISONBURG PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**February 10, 2010**

The Harrisonburg Planning Commission held its regular meeting on Wednesday, February 10, 2010, at 7:00 p.m. in the City Council Chambers, 409 South Main Street.

Members present: Richard Baugh, Charles Chenault, Muawia Da'Mes, Alan Finks, Deb Fitzgerald, Bill Jones and J.M. Snell.

Members absent: none.

Also present: Stacy Turner, Director of Planning and Community Development; Adam Fletcher, City Planner; Alison Banks, Planner and Secretary.

Chairman Jones called the meeting to order and determined there was a quorum with all seven members in attendance. He then asked for review and approval of the minutes from the January 13, 2010 regular Planning Commission meeting and the minutes from the January 13, 2010 Comprehensive Plan review meeting.

Mrs. Fitzgerald moved to approve the minutes.

Mr. Chenault seconded the motion.

All voted in favor of approving the minutes. (7-0)

**New Business**

***Rezoning – 116 Reservoir Street (Blue Ridge Insurance Services, Inc.)***

Chairman Jones read the request and asked staff to summarize.

Mrs. Banks said the Comprehensive Plan designates this area as Public / Semi-Public. This designation includes both existing and proposed public and semi-public use. They include lands owned or leased by the Commonwealth of Virginia (except for institutions of higher learning), the federal government, the City of Harrisonburg, and other governmental organizations.

The following land uses are located on and adjacent to the property:

Site: Vacant, single-story building formerly used by Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services, zoned R-2

North: Single-family and duplex dwellings, zoned R-2

East: Single-family dwellings, zoned R-2

South: Vacant parcels and single-family dwellings, zoned R-2

West: Vacant parcels and duplex dwellings, zoned R-2, and Woodbine Cemetery, zoned R-3

This is a request to rezone a 1.2 +/- acre parcel from R-2, Residential District to R-3C, Multiple Dwelling Residential District Conditional. The property is located at the intersection of Reservoir Street and Franklin Street (extended) and is improved with a single story brick building. Formerly owned and occupied by the Commonwealth of Virginia, the 11,991 +/- square foot building was used as offices and an agricultural lab. Such a use within the R-2, Residential Zoning District was permitted because the property was owned and operated by the State.

If rezoned, the applicant would relocate her insurance business to the site. The insurance agency would occupy slightly more than half of the facility. The remaining portion of the building would be leased to other non-residential uses permitted within the R-3 zoning district. Interior renovations are planned for the facility; however, no additions or major exterior renovations would be made. Based on the size of the building 40 parking spaces are required. The applicant proposes to resurface and mark the large, front parking area in order to provide the required number of spaces. There are also several parking spaces along the southern side of the property that can be utilized.

The Comprehensive Plan designates the land as Public / Semi-Public because the Commonwealth of Virginia owned the property; however, the surrounding area is indicated as Medium Density residential, which is most closely associated with the uses permitted in the R-3 district. The majority of the adjacent properties are zoned R-2 and consist of single-family and duplex dwellings.

As part of the application, the applicant has proffered the following:

- multi-family and townhouse dwellings would not be permitted;
- residential units would be limited to occupancy by a family or two unrelated individuals.

Although not proffered, the applicant has stated a willingness to work with the City on issues pertaining to right-of-way dedication for the planned improvements to Reservoir Street.

Staff feels this is a viable re-use of a property that has been vacant for some time, while also complying with the Comprehensive Plan. The submitted proffers make the property more aligned with the current uses of the surrounding neighborhood and allow for the facility to once again be used as offices. Staff supports this rezoning request and a favorable recommendation to City Council.

Chairman Jones asked if there were any questions for staff. Hearing none, he opened the public hearing and asked if there was anyone wishing to speak in favor of the request. Hearing none, he asked if there was anyone wishing to speak in opposition of the request. Hearing none, he closed the public hearing.

Mrs. Banks noted that the applicant was present if there were any questions.

Chairman Jones asked if the applicant would like to speak.

Ms. Karin Flagle, the applicant, said no, unless there were questions from the Commission.

Chairman Jones asked for discussion, or a motion, on the matter.

Mr. Chenault said I think this is an exciting reuse of property; which is actually a very historical property. This was the location of the City's first reservoir. I move to recommend approval of the rezoning.

Mr. Finks seconded the motion.

Chairman Jones said there is a motion to recommend approval and a second. He then called for a voice vote on the matter.

All voted in favor of the motion to recommend approval. (7-0)

***Rezoning – 715 North Main Street; Special Use Permits – (Reduced Parking 10-3-97 (8)); (Charitable and Benevolent Uses 10-3-97 (9)); (Boarding and Rooming house 10-3-97 (13))***

Chairman Jones said we will hear next four items together as one report.

Mr. Chenault recused himself from this request and left the Council Chambers.

Mr. Fletcher said the Comprehensive Plan designates this area as Commercial. This designation states that these areas include uses for retail, wholesale, or service functions. These areas are found along major travel corridors and in the Central Business District of the City.

The following land uses are located on and adjacent to the property:

Site: Dwelling unit, zoned R-2

North: Across an undeveloped alley, residential dwellings, zoned R-2

East: Across an undeveloped alley, non-conforming commercial uses, zoned M-1

South: Across North Main Street and the intersection with East Washington Street, non-conforming dwelling units and commercial units, zoned M-1

West: Dwelling unit, zoned R-2

The Harrisonburg Redevelopment and Housing Authority (HRHA), the contract purchaser for the subject property, is requesting a rezoning from R-2, Residential District to M-1C, General Industrial District Conditional. In anticipation of the rezoning being approved, they are concurrently requesting three special use permits to allow a boarding and rooming house operation per Section 10-3-97 (13), a religious, educational, charitable and benevolent organization per Section 10-3-97 (9), and for approval to permit fewer than the required number of parking spaces per Section 10-3-97 (8). The property is located at 715 North Main Street near the intersection of North Main Street and Washington Street. No parking is permitted along this property's frontage with North Main Street; however an adjacent 12-foot alley provides access to the rear of the parcel.

Interestingly, this property was once zoned M-1. In April 2002, Lewis G. Bagwell, who is still the property owner, successfully rezoned the parcel, and the adjacent lot at 707 North Main Street, from M-1 to R-2. At that time, he wanted to alleviate issues with non-conformancy and to potentially convert the subject property's building into a duplex. Although physical renovations were carried out, the improvements were never fully completed and the unit was never officially converted to a duplex.

As the contract purchaser, HRHA would own the property but would work in cooperation with individuals from the New Community Project (NCP) and Our Community Place (OCP) to operate "a supportive housing and sustainable living project." At some time in the future, HRHA may sell the property to NCP and/or OCP. The plan is to provide a secure housing location for people who may be struggling with homelessness, drug use, and/or instability. While providing such shelter, the plan is to teach spiritual and environmental stewardship in faith to focus the residents' life toward a meaningful and positive future by way of therapeutic micro-enterprise projects. The larger mission is to help residents in need while also promoting and exemplifying how to live sustainably. To do this, a rezoning and three special use permits are necessary.

First, the applicants are requesting a rezoning to M-1C. As the land use designation for many properties along this corridor is Commercial, the applicants are proffering several conditions, which remove many of the industrial type uses permitted by the M-1 district.

The applicants are proffering the following:

1. The following uses permitted by right in the M-1 zoning classification will continue to be permitted by right:
  - a. Veterinary supply and service establishments including hospitals, laboratories and kennels.
  - b. Maintenance and repair shops.
  - c. Mercantile establishments and office facilities accessory to and supportive of the sale, processing and storage of goods and materials as permitted in this district.
  - d. Hotels, motels and similar types of transient accommodations. Nontransient housing facilities are not permitted nor may existing housing facilities be expanded.
  - e. Accessory buildings and uses customarily incidental to any of the above-listed uses.
  - f. Training facilities and vocational schools.
  - g. Public utilities, public service or public transportation uses or building, generating, purification or treatment plants, water storage tanks, pumping or regulator stations, telephone exchange and transformer or substations.
  - h. Plant nurseries and greenhouses.
  - i. Public uses.

The remaining uses and any future uses added to the uses permitted in the by right section of the M-1 zoning classification being proffered out and thereby not permitted. Also as an additional general proffer, no buses shall be parked other than for immediate loading and unloading on this property.

2. For purposes of the sign ordinance, the applicant proffers to be bound by that portion of the sign ordinance for the R-1 zoning classification as established in Section 11-7-4 of the City ordinances, the signage permitted in the M-1 zoning classification being proffered out and thereby not permitted.

Staff believes the submitted proffers remove the possibility of uses that would be uncharacteristic of the future plans for this area of North Main Street and supports a favorable recommendation to City Council to rezone the properties from R-2 to M-1C.

In anticipation of approval, the applicants are concurrently applying for the necessary special use permits to allow their desired uses. The first request is to permit a boarding and rooming house per Section 10-3-97 (13). The Zoning Ordinance now defines boarding and rooming houses as: *A single detached dwelling, where the property owner or property lessee/operator resides on the premises, and where for compensation and by prearrangement, for definite periods, lodging and/or meals are provided for three (3) persons to a maximum of ten (10) persons. The resident property owner or resident property lessee, who operates the boardinghouse or rooming house, shall be responsible for making an application for any required special use permit. A boardinghouse or rooming house must obtain an annual business license as required by the Harrisonburg City Code and the boardinghouse or rooming house shall also be in compliance with the Virginia Maintenance Code (VMC). The responsible party shall schedule a yearly inspection that shall be conducted between October 1<sup>st</sup> and October 31<sup>st</sup> to ensure compliance with the current VMC and other applicable regulations. Should the property not comply with the VMC or other regulations, a specified time shall be given to make corrections. If the corrections are not made within the allotted time, or if the responsible party fails to have the property inspected by October 31<sup>st</sup>, the special use permit shall automatically expire and become null and void. Operation of a boardinghouse or rooming house*

*shall not be deemed a home occupation.* The applicants should be mindful of all stipulations as required in the above definition.

Their boarding and rooming house plan is to have up to three residents per bedroom and to permit the maximum number of boarding and rooming house occupants, which is ten. There will also be a bedroom for the twenty-four hour staff resident. As described within their application package, there will be several house rules including on site and common work hours; required dinners; weekly meetings; curfews; no alcohol, drugs, or weapons; and that residents must sleep in the house every night.

To allow the “non-profit micro-enterprise projects” and the other planned uses, a second special use permit is necessary per Section 10-3-97 (9) for religious, educational, charitable and benevolent institutional uses. The micro-enterprise projects include the residents working on a small urban market garden, working on small bicycle maintenance and repair projects, and helping with sustainable-living tours and educational workshops that would be, from time to time, offered on-site. An office to support these uses is planned but would not be used by the general public. Staff would like to point out there is no conflict with Section 10-3-97 (9)’s regulations that prohibit religious, education, charitable and benevolent uses from providing housing facilities because the boarding or rooming house is viewed as a separate use, which could function without the association with the charitable and benevolent uses.

Finally, the third special use permit requested is per Section 10-3-97 (8) to reduce required parking areas. Overall, the property would need a total of 13 parking spaces as the boarding and rooming house requires ten spaces and the office use related to the religious, educational, charitable and benevolent uses requires three spaces. The applicant explains that the people who will be residing in the boarding and rooming house will most likely not have a vehicle and therefore do not require space for parking. Further, as described above, part of the larger mission of this project and the non-profit organization is to promote and exemplify environmental stewardship, which in this case will be through maintaining green/open space for gardening and by using, encouraging, and repairing bicycles for alternate means of transportation. Per this request, the applicants would like a reduction of eight parking spaces while providing five spaces for the resident staff person(s) and for visitors associated with the activities on site. As required by the special use permit, they must maintain the area that would have been used as parking as open/green space and also document this requirement in the deed to the property.

At the present time, a portion of the backyard is utilized as an access/driveway for the adjoining property to the south at 707 North Main Street. The applicants have explained to staff when they take ownership of the property they will most likely remove this access as they plan to use this area for gardening or other activities. The current owner of the subject property also owns the adjoining property to the south. If this access drive is removed, the adjacent public alley continues behind the 707 North Main Street property, and therefore it can be used for backyard access.

Staff believes the proposals are positive and will be beneficial for the restoration of this property and for the surrounding neighborhood. Staff further believes this project would be valuable for the larger community in its mission to provide assistance toward a resolution for struggling citizens and also by offering a model for sustainable living. In addition, the overall proposal meets several objectives of the Comprehensive Plan including working with the community for neighborhood improvement; partnering with HRHA and others to address community housing needs; preserving and enhancing the City’s natural resources and encouraging development that is compatible with

nature; promoting resource conservation; promoting bicycling as an alternative mode of transportation; and stabilizing, improving, maintaining, and revitalizing neighborhoods under stress.

Staff believes the submitted proffers for the property are in-line with the future plans for this section of North Main Street and recommends approving the rezoning from R-2 to M-1C. Staff further encourages approval of the special use permits to allow a boarding and rooming house per Section 10-3-97 (13), to permit reduced parking per Section 10-3-97 (8), and to permit religious, educational, charitable, and benevolent uses per Section 10-3-97 (9), but only with the following conditions:

1. The boarding and rooming house along with the uses permitted by Section 10-3-97 (9) and the reduced parking privileges shall be applicable only for uses the same as the applicants' proposed project.
2. The property shall supply no less than five parking spaces.
3. If in the opinion of Planning Commission or City Council, parking issues become a nuisance, the reduced parking special use permit could be recalled for further review, which could lead to the need for additional parking spaces, conditions, restrictions, or the revocation of the permit.

Staff believes the above conditions would help control parking conflicts for the proposed uses and prevent other non-profit religious, educational, charitable, and benevolent uses from operating that may not require as few parking spaces, or generally function, as is proposed by the current organizations.

Chairman Jones asked if there were any questions for staff. Hearing none, he opened the public hearing for the rezoning request and asked if there was anyone wishing to speak in favor of the request.

Mr. Michael Wong, Director of Harrisonburg Redevelopment and Housing Authority, said he would like to invite Tom Benevento and Daniel Brumbaugh-Keeney with New Community Project to join him while discussing and answering questions for this request. In your packets you received the names, addresses and signatures of some of the adjoining property owners in support of this request; we actually have an updated list we want to share with you tonight. As you know, the housing authority has been very actively involved in trying to address some of the housing issues in our local area. We have seen an increase in the needs of the homeless; in fact this past year we have seen a dramatic increase. We just recently did a point in time count. We do not have those totals yet, but we did receive the most surveys that we have ever had. This proposal addresses a segment of a need in which some of those currently homeless are ready to transition into. It is what we call a supportive housing situation. We are excited about this project. We have looked at several other properties in regard to this proposal and we feel like this location is one of the best options for it. Tom and Daniel will now talk about the programs and the focus of the project.

Tom Benevento said thank you to staff for their work on this and for giving us clarity on how we needed to put this all together. I would like to discuss New Community Project, which is doing a number of programs around the City in terms of sustainability. Our mission is to create sustainable systems that care for creation, empower people most marginalized within our community, and educate. This house will reflect that mission. We do not see this as a shelter; a shelter is a place where people come in and out for short terms. This is really a supportive home for people that are

motivated to make changes in their lives. It is designed so that there is an on-site staff person, 24 hours, who lives with the individuals in the house. There are a number of rules and a schedule for the residents of the house. We see it as a place that can be the structure some people need in order to help them move forward to become successful in their lives.

There are two components to the house. The first is the supportive housing and the other is the model of sustainable living. We have found in the community there is a real desire and interest in learning about how we can live with more of a relationship with the earth, in sustainable types of ways. We want this to be a place where individuals from the area can come to learn and exchange some of those ideas, as well as interface with those people that are in a struggling time in their lives. We have a market garden program that we want to set-up, such that the individuals in the home would work on a certain schedule and then sell to the local farmers market and a couple of local restaurants. This food will be grown organically, and will be hand-tooled; there are no tractors, etc. We deliver our product using bike trailers, so there is no fossil fuel used in the process. There would be the occasional groups that come to see what we are doing at the house and share ideas. We would have occasional workshops, such as organic gardening, from time to time. Ultimately, our goal is to attempt to manifest God's dream of our ability to care for each other as a human family without distinctions.

Mr. Finks asked how long would an individual stay at the home.

Mr. Benevento said we actually would interview the individuals to determine if they are the appropriate kind of person to move into the house. We would then set up a contract with the individual and provide a mentor who would touch base with them weekly to determine if they are keeping up with their contract and making changes in their lives. We would set up this living arrangement as six months minimum, but typically it would be a year, maybe even longer.

Mr. Da'Mes asked if it would be limited to an individual or would families come and stay for periods of time?

Mr. Benevento replied the way the rooms are set up would allow only two per room.

Mr. Fletcher said they could actually have up to three per bedroom. The occupancy per room would be regulated by building codes.

Mr. Brumbaugh-Keeney said when we originally planned this we had been thinking of individuals, but certainly we would be open to couples and potentially families. However, that is not our intent.

Chairman Jones asked if there was anyone else wishing to speak in favor of the request. Hearing none, he asked if there was anyone wishing to speak against the request. Hearing none, he closed the public hearing and asked if there was any discussion.

Mr. Baugh said this came up at City Council last night, because of an encroachment issue with this building, and if you recall this is very similar to a proposal we considered eighteen months ago at a site on Fifth Street. Many of the same people are involved and it had a lot of the same merits as this request. The Fifth Street proposal was tabled, and ultimately withdrawn, at the applicant's request; because of mixed feelings within that neighborhood. From my perspective, that was a very worthy project as is this one. I am favorable to this request.

Mr. Da'Mes asked if there are other examples of boarding houses in Harrisonburg.

Mr. Fletcher replied there are a few, none of the nature that would operate such as this. We actually have no legal, conforming rooming and boarding houses per our definition.

Mr. Finks said there are two things that have made an impression on me this evening. At the Fifth Street request, the neighbors had concerns whether or not the people living at the house would be checked-out, before they moved in and would it be a long term commitment. With this request, it is more of a long term commitment for individuals who are there to help turn their lives around. This is very positive to me, and I have heard no objections this evening; therefore I am going to move that we approve this request.

Mrs. Turner stated that the Planning Commission needs to take each individual request separately and then vote on them separately.

Mr. Finks changed his motion to be in favor of the rezoning request.

Chairman Jones said we have a motion to recommend favorably for the rezoning request; is there a second.

Mr. Snell said he would second the motion if the motion includes the proffers.

Mr. Finks replied yes, the motion is to recommend approval with the proffers.

Mr. Snell asked staff if they could confirm that the property owners, Mr. Bagwell and Mr. Shifflett are in agreement with the proffers; because Mr. Wong only signed as the contract purchaser.

Mr. Fletcher said yes, there is a document in your packet that says they, as owners, consent to the applications that have been made.

Mr. Snell said if HRHA can represent Mr. Bagwell and Mr. Shifflett then I am in agreement.

Mr. Bagwell and Mr. Shifflett, property owners at 715 North Main Street, came forward at this time to say they were in total agreement with these requests and have been since day one.

Mr. Snell said very good and seconded the motion.

Chairman Jones called for a voice vote.

All voted in favor of the motion to recommend approval of the rezoning request with proffers. (6-0)

Chairman Jones opened the public hearing for the special use request to section 10-3-97(8), reduced parking, and asked if there was anyone wishing to speak in favor of the request. Hearing none, he asked if there was anyone wishing to speak opposed to the request. Hearing none, he closed the public hearing and asked for a motion.

Mr. Finks moved to recommend approval with the conditions provided by staff.

Mr. Snell seconded.

All voted in favor of the motion. (6-0)

Chairman Jones opened the public hearing for the special use request to section 10-3-97(9), charitable and benevolent uses, and asked if there was anyone wishing to speak in favor of the request. Hearing none, he asked if there was anyone wishing to speak opposed to the request. Hearing none, he closed the public hearing and asked for a motion.

Mr. Baugh moved to recommend approval of the request, subject to the conditions stated.

Ms. Fitzgerald seconded the motion.

All voted in favor of the motion. (6-0)



Chairman Jones opened the public hearing for the special use request to section 10-3-97(13), boarding and rooming house, and asked if there was anyone wishing to speak in favor of the request. Hearing none, he asked if there was anyone wishing to speak opposed to the request. Hearing none, he closed the public hearing and asked for a motion.

Mr. Baugh moved to recommend approval of the request, subject to the conditions recommended by staff.

Mr. Snell seconded the motion.

All voted in favor of the motion. (6-0)

Chairman Jones said this will go before City Council on March 9, 2010.

Mr. Chenault returned to the Council Chambers at this time.

### **Unfinished Business**

None.

### **Public Input**

Hanna Balca, a local resident of Harrisonburg, said she was attempting to open a clinic in her home and discovered, when getting her business license, that her property is zoned M-1, Industrial. I am here today to ask or to see, how you feel about changing the zoning laws within my area, or within the home occupations, so that I could have my business within my home. I want to open a by-appointment-only massage clinic within my home; but, I am finding out that there are some road blocks. I have a business plan written out, which I brought copies to share, and would like to practice my business in my home. My home is on Virginia Avenue, right next to the JMU facility building, I am surrounded by parking lots and my business would have no greater impact than what is already there. However, I understand that there is a much broader picture regarding this, and I wanted to get your input on that.

Chairman Jones asked Ms. Balca if she had come in and spoken with staff.

Mr. Fletcher said to make Planning Commission aware, we have spoken with Ms. Balca at length, making her aware of the issues and how she could potentially make this possible in her situation. It may involve multiple steps such as an ordinance amendment, redefining home occupations, a rezoning, and more. This all began as a home occupation attempt, when Ms. Balca was informed she could not do her business as a home occupation. She would like to attempt to do this in the easiest way possible, with the least financial burden upon her, which is why she did not attempt to do an ordinance amendment right away. She wanted to come in and just let those who make the decisions know what it is she wanted to do.

Ms. Banks added that in this particular case it cannot be remedied with a change to the home occupation definition. Ms. Balca's home is in an M-1, Industrial District as a non-conforming use, and the M-1, zoning does not permit home occupations. I feel it would be somewhat illegal to amend the ordinance and allow this as a home occupation in the M-1, because we do not allow residential uses within the M-1. We have discussed with Ms. Balca different routes she could take, such as amending the ordinance to allow personal service establishments.

Mr. Fletcher agreed that it was a very complicated situation because of the non-conforming dwelling issue. Even if Ms. Balca were to get through the zoning issues of this matter, there are still the building code issues of living and working within one building.

Mrs. Turner added that personal service establishments are not permitted within this zoning district. If the commercial building next door to Ms. Balca wanted to open up as a massage therapist the answer would be no, because they are not permitted within the industrial zoning classification. That is why the ordinance would need to be amended; to make personal service establishments a permitted use within the M-1.

Ms. Balca said she understands, and if she lived in a neighborhood she would not want people coming in and out of the neighborhood all day. In this specific situation, there are people in and out of the area all the time. I am just looking for the legal way to make this happen.

Mr. Fletcher said we can definitely help Ms. Balca craft something to present to the Planning Commission.

Mr. Chenault said this use is not totally out of character with the other uses and zoning classifications in the area.

Mrs. Turner asked if this house was on a lot to itself.

Mr. Fletcher replied yes, it is a small ranch house, surrounded by driveways.

Mr. Chenault said JMU owns behind this house.

Ms. Balca replied yes, they lease everything around the house, but the grass.

Mr. Baugh said I would be reluctant to allow this use as a home occupation. But, if this were a special use permit that would be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, I would be more open to it.

There was discussion between Ms. Balca and the Planning Commission regarding rezoning or amending the Zoning Ordinance to allow a special use permit for personal service establishments.

Mrs. Turner said this is something that she and her landlord would need to discuss; the landlord may be more agreeable to a special use permit process rather than a rezoning.

Mr. Fletcher said come and talk to staff again and then you would need to go to your landlord to discuss your ideas.

### **Report of secretary and committees**

Mrs. Banks said there is no proactive zoning report for this month. The weather and recent snowfalls have made it difficult to observe violations. We hope to catch-up next month.

Mr. Baugh said at the City Council meeting last night two things came up. The CVS rezoning was approved at the intersection of South High Street and South Avenue. The other item is, if you recall, the Shentel tower at Rockingham Mutual Insurance. This came forward as a special use permit and staff had recommended an ordinance amendment dealing with height and setback at that same hearing. Shentel has found a different location and has withdrawn their request; however, staff would like to move forward with the ordinance amendments. The City attorney has noted that the record does not reflect where a public hearing was held on the ordinance amendments; therefore it will be added as a public hearing for the next City Council meeting.

### **Other Matters**

Mr. Fletcher said to follow-up on the Comprehensive Plan draft, we have made changes to chapters 13 and 14, which we discussed last month. Some of those changes were a short description about the vacancies within shopping centers; I worked with Brian Shull on language for this. Language

discussing wireless and broadband utility services was also added, this was somewhat of an afterthought from the vacancy discussion and we felt it needed to be included. The language more or less encourages some of those services to come to the City. The other item was making it more understandable as to what the Downtown Urban Vision and Values Plan is and stating who wrote it.

The last thing I want to discuss is coming up with any ideas for publicly announcing the Comprehensive Plan. I have a list of locations that we can use and a tentative date of about April 21<sup>st</sup> to begin public input. This is a list of ideas for advertising – public service announcements on the radio, a TV3 interview with a Commission member, the City Web site, and the City Facebook. The Facebook page would have a link to submit input on a specific topic, such as transportation, land use, neighborhoods, community, education, arts, etc.; then this information would be sent to a specific email account. This link could be open-ended, beginning with the public input meetings and would be available through August or later. Or it could be subject specific, where we would take input on transportation and land use in April, then on arts and education in May; whatever you would like.

Mrs. Fitzgerald said it may be more useful to have the specific link parallel the public input session you are having.

Mr. Fletcher said we also can do a “blast” email through the past and present Citizens Academy; who can then share the information with others. There are several blogs that we hope to get information out on as well. There is also City span, which we will utilize. Sending notices home through the schools, sending notices out to some of the community organizations so that they can share this in their newsletters. Of course, we will be utilizing the Daily News Record. Are there any other ideas?

Mr. Da’Mes asked to expand on the organizations that you would send notices to and how would you come up with those organizations.

Mr. Fletcher said that is a good question. We could do something like postcard mailers that would be sent to every property within the City.

Mr. Da’Mes said you probably want to narrow that field.

Mrs. Turner said you asked about organizations; there is a list of things like the Rotary, Lions, Realtors Association, and so forth, which we will send a direct mailing to. They can then either announce it at a meeting or put it in their newsletter. Also, the Chamber of Commerce has members that are not just major property owners, but major business owners as well. I do not see us going through land parcels books to select out individual land owners to mail notices to.

Mrs. Fitzgerald asked how many public input sessions are you considering?

Mr. Fletcher said that is up to the Commission.

Mrs. Turner said we still need to hear from Planning Commission if they want to hear them by topics or generally overall.

Mr. Chenault said topic driven can be good. If we do it topic by topic we may end up losing interest. We could perhaps group topics together.

Mrs. Turner asked if everyone was in favor of specific topics for each meeting.

Mrs. Fitzgerald asked if it would be sensible to decide on a number of meetings that would be reasonable and then work backwards to try and figure out what a rational collection of topics would be.

Mr. Fletcher said we also need to decide on what would be our end date for input.

Mr. Chenault suggested two months.

Mr. Fletcher said I was thinking more of being completed in the mid summer. That gives us April, May, June, and July.

Mrs. Turner said I do not know that you want the input time frame to last that long.

Mr. Finks said when you get into the summer such as June and July, people are on vacation.

Mrs. Fitzgerald said it would be difficult to market something that is lasting over that length of time.

Mr. Fletcher said I was envisioning that we would market it from now until we begin in April.

Mrs. Turner said four months is probably too long.

Mr. Chenault said I know we had discussed a summit type of session and I am not opposed to something like that.

Mrs. Fitzgerald said I am not sure how logistically that particular kind of approach would fit with this particular input.

Mr. Da'Mes said the summit format is not a very structured type of process. As for Facebook and blogging input, I personally would much rather answer a survey as opposed to blogging my ideas.

Mrs. Fitzgerald said I thought the electronic way of gather information would be more open ended instead of a survey.

Mr. Fletcher replied my thoughts were open ended; but we can do a survey.

Mrs. Turner said the input would not be part of the blog.

Mr. Fletcher said correct. If you were to place input onto this page, no one else would see it. It would not be posted; it would come directly to us.

Mr. Baugh said last time we really had two rounds of public input. The public input session such as we are discussing here that helps you to craft your ideas. Then there was a public input session once we had a draft together. What I am wondering is, are we going to put this draft out for public input.

Mrs. Turner said are you saying to have public input meetings at the beginning, and then after a draft is done have more of a summit approach on the Comprehensive Plan draft.

Mr. Baugh said last time there was some mechanism where once a draft was in place we put it out for public input. I guess I am thinking that was not a bad idea, but I am not hearing that we are thinking about doing that this time.

Mr. Chenault said I think it is good to have a second round of public input on the final draft. I do not think it would require multiple sessions.

Mr. Fletcher said I have heard a lot of very good ideas; but I do not know which direction we are going at this time.

Mr. Da'Mes said what about my idea of a marketing theme to help attract people, a theme that says "I want to participate." Secondly, what about facilitation, last time I believe you had a facilitator; what are we envisioning now.

Mrs. Fitzgerald said the facilitation was important during the last review because we were starting from scratch.

Mrs. Turner said we, staff, thought that this group would do facilitation as necessary. We need to discuss locations for the public input sessions.

Mrs. Fitzgerald said schools are places where historically someone talks at you, not with you.

Mr. Chenault added there are Simms, the library, and the Recreation Center.

Mr. Fletcher said what if staff comes up with an action plan and we email it to you.

Mrs. Fitzgerald asked if we wanted to do this two tiered as Mr. Baugh suggested. Perhaps get some basic level input and then come back with the draft.

Mr. Baugh said what I was thinking of as a first tier was what we have been discussing the past several months and getting public input on that. Then after we have an actual draft of everything, we put that out there in a public forum type arrangement.

Mrs. Turner summarized what had been discussed. We want to have topic based input sessions, and locations other than just schools.

All the Planning Commissioners agreed.

Chairman Jones asked if the Davis, CA, bicycle trip was still on.

Mr. Da'Mes said yes, he is Planning Commission's representative. The trip is March 4<sup>th</sup> through the 8<sup>th</sup>. We have been discussing ways we can communicate back the information we gather from this trip, rather than just doing a large presentation.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

---

Chairman William L. Jones, Jr.

---

Secretary, Alison Banks